



Smithsonian
National Museum of the American Indian

PRELIMINARY ABSTRACTS

for

PRESENTATIONS AND POSTERS

for the

International Mountmaking Forum

at the

Smithsonian

May 5-6, 2010

Fosshape and Its Application for Costume Mounts

Alternatives to costly fiberglass mannequins and readymade dress forms, such as carved ethafoam and hollow buckram forms, are frequently employed in three-dimensional costume display. These alternative materials can reduce the cost of mount making but can be time-consuming in both preparation and execution. An exploration of a new material, called Fosshape was prompted by an exhibition which required lightweight concealed display forms.

Fosshape is a non-woven material that has the hand and look of felt in its “raw” state. When loosely fitted over a form and pinned or stitched in place the application of wet or dry heat causes the material to shrink dramatically and conform to the foundation form. No dry time is necessary and the post-heating rigidity of the Fosshape is strong enough that generally a single layer can be used to create a functional form for the display of historic or contemporary dress. The introduction of an ethafoam core provides the receiver for hardware required for installation.

Fosshape proved a successful material for display mounts for the exhibition *Contemporary Japanese Fashion: The Mary Baskett Collection* which was on view at the Textile Museum from October 17, 2009 thru April 11, 2010. Forty forms were produced for a wide variety of contemporary garments and accessories. Both head and legs were created to accommodate hats, stockings, and shoes where necessary. The forms proved to be lightweight, inexpensive to produce and aesthetically pleasing. The use of Fosshape for the construction of costume mounts expands options for creative exhibition design and presentation through its versatility and low cost. This paper will discuss in detail the technical aspects of both the material itself and the production of Fosshape mounts.